

PART 406 - Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers

Subpart - A – General

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PART 406 - Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers

Subpart A - General

406.0 Purpose.

This section outlines the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy on making conservation technical assistance and other agency resources more accessible to Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers (LRF/R).

406.1 Definition.

LRF/R is a term used to describe those farmers and ranchers who, when compared to other farmers, ranchers and farm operations in a given geographic area, such as a State, county, or project area, have distinct disadvantages in obtaining Department of Agriculture (USDA) program assistance.

406.2 Characteristics.

LRF/R have one or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) Total operator household income is under \$20,000; total farm assets are under \$150,000; and gross sales are under \$100,000.
- (b) Total household net income, for both farm and non-farm, is 75 percent or less of the non-metropolitan median income level for the state or county of residence.
- (c) A lack of access to capital, labor, or equipment and a minimal awareness of USDA programs due wholly or in part to social, cultural, or language barriers.
- (d) Specific program eligibility criteria, consistent with the above, will be determined during program development.

406.3 Policy.

- (a) NRCS will make special efforts to increase LRF/R access to conservation technical assistance (CTA) activities (conservation planning and/or follow-up), and USDA financial assistance programs to enhance their soil, water, and related resources through the following processes:

- (1) Developing strategic and/or performance and/or business plans throughout the agency (national, regional, State and local), including objectives and action items that address the conservation needs and economic challenges of LRF/R.

(2) Through the budget formulation and allocation process, the appropriate funding shall be allocated to address the conservation and related needs of LRF/R.

(b) NRCS will be fair and equitable to all citizens regarding access to programs.

(c) NRCS will consider the needs of LRF/R when developing and implementing incentive-based conservation programs to avoid barriers to their participation.

406.4 Responsibilities

(a) The Chief or his or her designee will be responsible for the following actions:

(1) Administering comprehensive program policies and procedures that require flexibility, diversity, and responsiveness in meeting LRF/R needs and all civil rights requirements.

(2) Ensuring that equal access and opportunity are integral parts of all decisions and processes affecting the conduct of NRCS conservation programs.

(3) Ensure that all members of the community and beneficiaries of program actions have equal opportunity to serve on state and local boards, councils, and committees that set conservation priorities and oversee program administration.

(b) The Deputy Chief for Programs or designee will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of programs and services to LRF/R regarding the conservation, development, and use of soil, water and related resources.

(c) The Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division will be responsible for providing national leadership and policy development for LRF/R initiatives.

(d) The Deputy Chief for Science and Technology or designee will be responsible for the following actions:

(1) Providing national leadership for developing low cost resource management system alternatives, through the adoption of sound traditional conservation practices and identification of alternative crops and cropping systems.

(2) Transferring technology to NRCS Regional and State offices that is developed by the following entities:

(i) NRCS

- (ii) The Agricultural Research Service
 - (iii) The 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land Grant Institutions and/or Universities
 - (iv) The Hispanic Serving Institutions
 - (v) Tribal governments
 - (vi) Other sources
- (e) The Deputy Chief for Soil Survey and Resource Assessment or designee will be responsible for developing relevant natural resource assessment tools to assist with LRF/R initiatives.
- (f) The Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Accountability or designee will be responsible for developing progress reporting methods capable of yielding status reports on LRF/R activities. Reports will include accomplishments, success stories, and strategies that have proven effective in reaching LRF/R.
- (g) The Deputy Chief for Management or designee will be responsible for utilizing agency-wide outreach structures to broaden access and assist in the delivery of services to LRF/R.
- (h) The Regional Conservationist or their designees will be responsible for the following actions:
- (1) Providing leadership to the States in implementing LRF/R policy and procedures.
 - (2) Providing leadership for developing information and education programs that will support the delivery of quality technical assistance to LRF/R.
 - (3) Providing support training to the states relative to LRF/R identification and assistance strategies by encouraging the use of:
 - (i) The NRCS Resource Economics and Social Science Division
 - (ii) The Social Sciences Institute
 - (iii) Land Grant Institutions
 - (iv) Other sources.
- (i) The State Conservationist or designee will be responsible for the following actions:
- (1) Including specific objectives and action items in the Business Plan that will address the conservation needs and challenges of LRF/R.

- (2) Encouraging a cooperative farm assistance program delivery effort between the USDA agencies, the 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land Grant Institutions and/or Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and private and public farm organizations.
- (3) Providing training to the appropriate staff in working effectively with LRF/R.
- (4) Working with conservation districts, Resource Conservation and Development Councils, volunteer organizations, and other Federal, Tribal and State agencies, and groups to provide assistance to LRF/R.
- (5) Conducting appropriate outreach activities that will ensure service to LRF/R.

406.5 Reporting Requirements.

- (a) Until the necessary elements have been incorporated into the Performance Results Measurement System, (PRMS) the process described in GM-180, Part 406, paragraph [406.5\(b\)](#) will be used for progress reporting.
- (b) The State Conservationist, through the Regional Conservationist, will provide, by December 1st of each calendar year, the Director, Resource Conservation and Community Development Division, with the following information:
 - (1) An annual status report that highlights the efforts made to increase assistance to LRF/R, (e.g., numbers of LRF/R, numbers receiving assistance, and type of assistance).
 - (2) The reports will be used for informational purposes, publicizing LRF/R program activities, and formulating LRF/R budget allowances for the States.
 - (3) The reports should reflect the magnitude of LRF/R program within the State, planned and implemented activities, success stories, or strategies that have proven effective in reaching LRF/R, and other noteworthy activities that can be used by NRCS or the Department to further LRF/R programs.

Subpart- B - Authorities

406.10 Legal Authorities

Conservation Planning and Application

PART 406 - Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers

Subpart- B - Authorities

406.10 Legal Authorities.

The Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (HR 3030, Public Law 100–233, Section 622) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain a Limited Resource Farmer Initiative while carrying out any USDA programs.